

## Message Text

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ACTION ARA-14

INFO OCT-01 ISO-00 CIAE-00 DODE-00 PM-05 H-01 INR-07

L-03 NSAE-00 NSC-05 PA-01 PRS-01 SP-02 SS-15

USIA-06 AID-05 SAB-02 IO-13 CU-04 MCT-01 EB-08

COME-00 TRSE-00 OMB-01 /095 W

-----016499 141526Z /45

P R 141235Z JAN 78

FM AMEMBASSY BOGOTA

TO SECSTATE WASHDC PRIORITY 5744

INFO AMEMBASSY CARACAS

USSOUTHCOM

AMCONSUL BARRANQUILLA POUCH

AMCONSUL CALI POUCH

AMCONSUL MEDELLIN POUCH

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E.O. 11652: N/A

TAGS: PINT, PINS, PEPR, ETRD, CO

SUBJ: THE WEEK IN COLOMBIA

1. SUMMARY. POLITICAL ACTIVITY INCREASED AS THE LONG HOLIDAY SEASON ENDED. THE EMBASSY HOSTED CONGRESSIONAL DELEGATIONS VISITING BOGOTA PRIMARILY TO DISCUSS THE PANAMA CANAL TREATIES. PRESIDENT LOPEZ OPENED A UNESCO CULTURAL CONFERENCE WHICH HAS BEEN HIGHLIGHTED BY A CUBAN-CHILEAN EXCHANGE OF RECRIMINATIONS. EMBASSY EFFORTS TOWARDS FILLING THE U.S. PAVILLION FOR BOGOTA'S 1978 INTERNATIONAL TRADE FAIR HAVE MET WITH CONSIDERABLE SUCCESS. THE YEAR-END SPREE OF KIDNAPPINGS SEEMS TO HAVE HALTED, AT LEY Y BUT LEFTIST GUERRILLAS REMAINED ACTIVE.

2. POLITICAL ACTIVITY RESUMES. POLITICAL LIFE RETURNED TO NORMAL FOLLOWING THE END OF THE LONG HOLIDAY SEASON. PRESIDENT LOPEZ, IN A RADIO INTERVIEW, CHASTISED POLITICIANS AND THE NEWS MEDIA FOR BEING OVERLY CRITICAL OF COLOMBIA AND THE GOVERNMENT.

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LATER IN THE WEEK EX-PRESIDENT CARLOS LLERAS, A LIBERAL PARTY PRE-CANDIDATE, RENEWED HIS ACCUSATION THAT LOPEZ HAS BEEN USING POLITICAL PATRONAGE TO INFLUENCE THE LIBERAL PARTY'S PRESIDENTIAL SELECTION PROCESS, AND WARNED THAT THE PARTY WILL COLLAPSE IF LOPEZ CONTINUES TO SHOW PARTIALITY. LLERAS LATER STATED THAT IF HE WERE DEFEATED IN FEBRUARY, HE WOULD NOT COLLABORATE IN A TURBAY CAMPAIGN OR GOVERNMENT. THIS REMARK CAUSED CONSIDERABLE

CONCERN IN POLITICAL CIRCLES, WHERE IT WAS VIEWED AS A DIRECT BREAK WITH THE TRADITION THAT DEFEATED CANDIDATES AT LEAST OFFER THEIR SUPPORT TO THE WINNER. MEANWHILE, THE SUPREME COURT HAS BEEN ASKED TO RULE ON THE LEGALITY OF THE LEGISLATION WHICH ESTABLISHED THE CONSTITUENT ASSEMBLY AND WHICH AUTHORIZED THE SEPARATION OF CONGRESSIONAL AND PRESIDENTIAL ELECTIONS.

3. CODELS DISCUSS PANAMA CANAL TREATIES. CONGRESSIONAL DELEGATIONS FORMED BY SENATORS BAKER AND GARN, AND SENATOR BENTSEN VISITED BOGOTA SIMULTANEOUSLY, AT A PRIVATE DINNER HOSTED BY PRESIDENT LOPEZ AND INCLUDING FOREIGN MINISTER LIEVANO AND THE AMBASSADOR, THE SENATORS DISCUSSED THE PANAMA CANAL TREATIES AT LENGTH AND SOLICITED COLOMBIAN VIEWS ON THE ISSUE. SEPTTEL TO FOLLOW.

4. UNESCO CONFERENCE MEETS. IN OPENING UNESCM'S FOURTH INTER-GOVERNMENTAL CONFERENCE ON CULTURE IN LATIN AMERICA AND THE CARIBBEAN, PRESIDEN LOPEZ EXPRESSED THE HOPE THAT A PATH OF "TRUE LIBERATION" MAY BE OPENED TO SPREAD CULTURE FROM AN ELITE TO THE POPULACE. CUBA'S MINISTER OF CULTURE, ARMANDO HART, GAINED CONSIDERABLE PUBLICITY, STRESSING LATIN AMERICA'S COMMON HISTORY AND ITS COMMON STRUGGLE AGAINST "EXPLOITERS." HART ALSO NOTED THE ABSENCE OF PUERTO RICA, EMPHASIZING THAT IT IS A PART OF LATIN AMERICA, AND HARSHLY CRITICIZED CHILE FOR ALLEGED CULTURAL SUPPRESSION. THE CHILEAN DELEGATE RESPONDED IN KIND. THE ISSUE OF GOVERNMENTAL CONTROL OF THE NEWS MEDIA WAS EXPECTED LIMITED OFFICIAL USE

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TO BE DISCUSSED, BUT HAS NOT YET SURFACED.

5. U.S. PAVILLION IN NINTH BOGOTA INTERNATIONAL TRADE FAIR. THE EMBASSY IS MAKING GOOD PROGRESS IN FILLING SPACE IN THE US PAVILLION FOR THE JULY 1978 BOGOTA INTERNATIONAL TRADE FAIR. MORE THAN 60 PERCENT OF THE 4,100 SQUARE METERS OF INDOOR AND OUTDOOR SPACE HAS BEEN ALLOCATED ON A PRELIMINARY BASIS TO THIRTY-FOUR FIRMS, AMONG THEM BOEING VERTOL, FRIDEN DE COLOMBIA, J.I. CASE, HOOVER AND HANNA INTERNATIONAL. IN ADDITION, THE STATE INDUSTRIAL DEVELOPMENT DEPARTMENTS OF INDIANA, PENNSYLVANIA AND FLORIDA HAVE INDICATED THEY WILL PURCHASE SPACE. MAJOR INDUSTRIAL LINES TO BE EXHIBITED IN THE PAVILLION WILL BE AGRICULTURAL MACHINERY, CONSTRUCTION EQUIPMENT AND MACHINERY, TOOLS, ELECTRONIC EQUIPMENT AND INSTRUMENTS AND CONTROLS.

6. PUBLIC ORDER. FOR THE SECOND WEEK IN A ROW, NO SUCCESSFUL KIDNAPPINGS WERE REPORTED, ALTHOUGH ONE MAN WAS KILLED WHILE RESISTING A KIDNAPPING ATTEMPT IN BOGOTA. THE VARIOUS MARXIST GUERRILLA ORGANIZATIONS, HOWEVER, WERE ACTIVE. THE POPULAR LIBERATION ARMY (EPL) CARRIED OUT ANOTHER BANK ROBBERY IN BOGOTA AND THE SOVIET-LINE FARC EXECUTED TWO CIVILLIANS IN ANTIOQUIA DEPARTMENT, APPARENTLY FOR COOPERATING WITH SECURITY

FORCES. MEMBERS OF THE M-19, WHICH HAS ATTEMPTED TO IDENTIFY ITSELF WITH THE IMMEDIATE INTERESTS OF THE WORKING CLASS, APPEARED AT A UNION MEETING IN MANIZALES AND DISTRIBUTED PROPAGANDA TO THE WORKERS. SECURITY FORCES ARRESTED SEVERAL ALLEGED MEMBERS OF A FARC URBAN CELL IN BOGOTA. POLICE AUTHORITIES LATEC WERE IRRITATED BY A MILITARY JUDGE'S DECISION TO RELEASE, FOR LACK OF EVIDENCE, ALL BUT ONE OF THE MEMBERS OF AN ALLEGED "TERRORIST SCHOOL" ARRESTED IN DECEMBER. THIS CASE, IN WHICH THE ARRESTING AUTHORITIES HAD OBTAINED SEVERAL CONFESSIONS, EXACERBATED THE GROWING DISCORD BETWEEN THE COURTS AND SECURITY FORCES. ASECIO

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